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STATE OF MICHIGAN
DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
LANSING



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SUPERINTENDENT OF
PUBLIC INSTRUCTION

MEMORANDUM

TO: ISD and District Superintendents
District Assessment Coordinators
High School Principals
High School MME Administration Staff

FROM: Joseph A. Martineau, PhD, Interim Director
Office of Educational Assessment & Accountability

DATE: December 19, 2007

This memorandum summarizes two decisions regarding administration of the Michigan Merit Examination (MME). Please carefully review these decisions and discuss implementation with your staff.

1. Elimination of MME Fall Retest

Beginning with the 2008-2009 school year, the MME will be administered only in the spring of each school year. The MME fall retest will be eliminated. Students who are eligible will have the opportunity for a state-paid retest during the spring administration in their 12th grade year.

The decision to eliminate the fall retest was based on the following considerations:

- Many schools shared concerns about the severe strain on resources needed to implement the test at the beginning of the school year. Counselors, in particular, are consumed with scheduling and late student enrollment issues during the days immediately before and after the start of school.
- Eliminating the need for test vouchers required for the national ACT removes an additional level of complexity for the state, schools, and students.
- State-allowed accommodations are not available on Day 1 of the MME fall retest because it is administered on an ACT national test date. This is a problem for students who have Individual Educational Plans (IEPs) or Section 504 plans specifying accommodations that cannot be accessed during the fall cycle.

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- Many schools already were encouraging students to refrain from using their one state-paid retest for the fall administration. They wanted an opportunity to review individual student results and offer remediation to help students qualify for installment payments of Michigan Promise scholarship funds. Schools wanted more time for classroom instruction as opposed to assessment.
- A number of students registered for the fall 2007 retest but did not take the retest. Students who did not take the assessment lost the opportunity to retest at no cost. MDE paid the full cost of the ACT test, whether or not the student actually tested. Elimination of the fall retest provides significant financial savings for local districts and the state.

2. MME Day 3 administration on Day 3 only

Beginning with the spring 2008 MME administration, all schools must give the Day 3 portion of the MME on the morning of Day 3. No exceptions allowing students to test before the morning of Day 3 will be granted. Any other exception must receive prior approval from the Office of Educational Assessment & Accountability (send requests to oeaa@michigan.gov). If a school deviates from the approved schedule, student test scores will be voided, tests will not count toward Adequate Yearly Progress (AYP), and students will be ineligible for Promise Grant funds.

Allowing schools to choose to give the Day 3 portion of the MME on either the afternoon of Day 2 or the morning of Day 3 (as was done in spring 2007) presents a serious security risk that could result in the security of items from Day 3 being breached. Such a breach would have a statewide impact similar to that experienced with the MEAP grade 5 and grade 6 writing assessments this fall. To avoid the possibility of such an impact on all high schools and MME examinees, all schools will be required to give all portions of the MME at the same time statewide. This reality still left MDE with two options: all students could take the Day 3 portion of the MME on the afternoon of Day 2, or all students could take it on the morning of Day 3.

We have polled school districts to determine the extent to which moving to a Day 3 administration impacted their negotiated contracts. Results of the survey indicated very few districts would need to re-open contracts. Based on this information, we are confirming the previous decision to implement a statewide Day 3 administration.

Thank you for providing input to these decisions and working with your staff to implement them. If you have questions, please contact me at martineauj@michigan.gov or 1-877-560-8378.